



“The role of educational and cultural networks of communities living abroad”

Survey on the practices and expectations of voluntary-sector networks

Introduction

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will be looking at the role of educational and cultural networks of the communities of nationals of its 47 member states living abroad. Pierre-Yves Le Borgn' (France, Socialist Group), member of the French National Assembly, has been appointed rapporteur for this topic.

The report he is preparing ties in with the Council of Europe's activities to promote cultural diversity and intercultural skills and to devise policies and instruments in the diversity field.¹ In the current context of identity crisis in Europe, as evidenced by the rise of anti-democratic and xenophobic political parties, the Parliamentary Assembly believes that there is a need for a radical change in political discourse and action in order to acknowledge the role of different cultures in the building of national identities and of a European identity characterised by diversity, pluralism and respect for human rights and human dignity (see *Resolution 2005(2014) on "Identities and diversity within intercultural societies"*²).

Convinced of the key role that can be played by the voluntary-sector and cultural networks of the communities of Europeans living abroad, the rapporteur wishes to gain a clearer picture of your role (both current and potential) in building up a sense of community, which may not be sufficiently taken into account in national and local strategies to foster harmonious co-existence. This will require, at national level (i.e. in the host countries), entering into more partnerships with voluntary-sector and cultural networks of different communities of Europeans.

We are writing to you to ask about your activities in this field, about your links with other community associations of other nationalities and your role in the integration and identity-building process of your members. We would also like to learn about your experience of the help which you may or may not receive from the host country in which you are located and from the country of which you are nationals. The final question concerns the European action that could be taken at Council of Europe and European Union level to better co-ordinate and support the activities of the voluntary-sector networks of Europeans living abroad.

It is important to make it clear that this report concerns Europeans living abroad in Europe and not outside the 47 Council of Europe member states.

We would be most grateful if you could reply to the enclosed questionnaire and e-mail your replies to Ms Martine Meyer, martine.meyer@coe.int, (phone: +33 3 88 41 35 07) in the secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly Committee by **17 February 2015**. We could also fix a telephone appointment to discuss your replies. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Dana Karanjac, dana.karanjac@coe.int, (phone: +33 3 90 21 48 77), responsible for the report in the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

¹ http://www.coe.int/t/democracy/topics2_en.asp#Intercultural_dialogue

² <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=21065&lang=en>

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please feel free to answer these questions as fully as possible.

1. When was your organisation established and how many members does it have?
2. What links do you have with other organisations of expatriates in the same host country? Do you work together on a regular basis?
3. What links do you have with your country of origin? Does it subsidise you?
4. What links do you have with the host countries? Do they subsidise you?
5. How big a role does your association play in the process of your members' integration into the host state? Please describe the relevant activities carried out to:
 - a) help your members build their identity without losing their ties to their culture and country of origin;
 - b) promote a stronger social bond between your members and the host community and foster genuine integration into the host country.
6. What social activities do you organise for children and for building their dual identity? For example, tuition in the language of the country of origin (public school system, Saturday schools, activities for children, etc.)
7. Do you think it is necessary for the Council of Europe in co-operation with the European Union and European states to implement policies specifically for the European diasporas? If yes, what measures would you like to see, in particular aimed at promoting better co-operation:
 - a) between networks of foreign communities living in the same host country?
 - b) between networks from the same country of origin located in various European countries?
 - c) between states at European level?